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energy notes

Welcome, readers, to the second edition of Energy Notes! The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) hopes to bring you Energy Notes every three or four months as an insert in your regular newsletters from the League of Cities and Towns, Montana Association of Counties, and Montana School Boards Association. We are grateful for the support from these organizations.

Energy Notes will offer energy-saving ideas that actually are saving money in Montana communities, information on new products or services that can reduce your energy costs, and news of federal, state, and utility programs which may affect local government energy budgets. We hope to make this publication truly useful. If your organization has used an energy-saving idea that can work for others, please let us know — we can share the information. Also, contact us for information on a particular energy matter. Any comments and suggestions for Energy Notes are most welcome. Please send them to: Pat Keating at DNRC's Energy Division (see address and phone number below).

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS GRANTS PROGRAMS

The Institutional Buildings Grants Program (IBGP), funded by DOE and administered by DNRC, still offers 50 percent matching grants to schools, hospitals, public care institutions, and local governments. The grants are for energy audits and technical analysis of buildings. Schools and hospitals are eligible for energy conservation retrofit grants as well. The present funding for energy audits is only available to local governments. Applications for energy audits for local governments are accepted throughout the fiscal year. Applications for technical analysis and energy conservation retrofits will be available in January 1985; the deadline for submittal is April 1.

Under an agreement with the Bonneville Power Administration, DNRC will administer the BPA-funded Institutional Buildings Program (IBP). The program is modeled after the DOE IBGP. Schools, hospitals, public care institutions, and federal, state, and local government buildings and facilities west of the Continental Divide are eligible for program funds (however, they must be located in the service area of a utility that has signed a power sales contract with BPA). One important difference in this program is that local government buildings are eligible for energy conservation retrofit grants that will save electricity.

If you have any questions on the IBGP or IBP, please contact Cory Plantenberg or Pat Keating at DNRC's Energy Division.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCING FOR ENERGY PROJECTS

Although federal grants have enabled many local governments to undertake local energy projects, another important source of funds is termed "alternative" or "third-party" financing. This source of funding should be of special interest to those entities otherwise ineligible under grants programs or those who want to do their own financing. Alternative financing includes bank loans, municipal leasing, tax exempt and revenue bonds, shared savings and energy purchase agreements. DNRC has information on these alternative financing methods and a list of energy services companies interested in providing alternative energy financing in Montana.

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DARK CAMPUSES

Several schools in California have successfully implemented what are termed "dark campus" programs that involve turning off all interior and exterior lights on campus when night custodians leave. It is felt that savings can justify the dark campuses, but only if they are not offset by increased vandalism costs as some have predicted. The experiences of four California school districts validate the approach and offer some outstanding savings.

Napa Valley Unified School District saved \$41,000 from its program in 1983.

Cupertino Union School District reduced its average vandalism cost per school per year by \$8,160 a savings of 29 percent.

Eastside Union School District began an energy savings program that saved over \$1 million annually with no increased vandalism.

Sam Wolf of the San Antonio School District stated that "with vandalism, the thrill is seeing the windows broken, in seeing the words written on the wall. It's no thrill to hang around in the dark!"

Livermore Joint Unified School Dist. found that a dark campus policy "positively will not increase vandalism" and saves 10 percent per year in electrical costs.

ENERGY SAVING PROGRAM PAYS OFF FOR HELENA

In June 1977, the City of Helena started an effort to conserve energy in city operations. A plan was developed and its implementation spearheaded by an energy coordinator appointed by the city commission.

One of the key elements in the energy management program was the Energy Reserve fund that was developed to carry out conservation projects at the various city facilities. The fund gets its money by taking what's left over from each department's fuel budget at the end of every month. For example, if the police department was budgeted \$7,500 for vehicle fuel for the month of September but used only \$5,000, the balance of \$2,500 would go into the Energy Reserve Fund.

The fund has paid for several projects, including a waste oil-fired heater for the Sanitation Department's 3,000-square-foot shop building. The unit itself cost \$2,700 and with the installation, plumbing and a 500-gallon storage tank, the total cost came to \$3,500. The unit provides total heat for the building during the day. At night it is shut off and heat is provided by a natural gas heater. The payback period for the waste oil-fired unit is estimated to be 1 1/2 to 2 years. For more information, contact Ed Robinson, City of Helena, 316 N. Park Avenue, Helena, MT 59632, 406/442-9920.

If you have any questions or need information about what you read in Energy Notes, please write or call:



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